

NUMENIUS OF APAMEA, The Father of Neo-Platonism. By *Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie*. London: George Bell and Sons, 1917. Pp. 215. Price \$1.25.

It is a great pity that so little of the voluminous writings of Numenius have come down to us, for what Dr. Guthrie has collected from fragments scattered through the works of early Christian Fathers and others and printed facing his excellent English renderings, arouses a desire for the complete text. Until Dr. Guthrie published this volume, which is practically identical with his doctor's dissertation submitted to the faculty of Columbia University, it had been thought that this Greek thinker of the reign of Marcus Aurelius was rather a Neo-Pythagorean and as such a forerunner of Neo-Platonism than a claimant to the honor, which has been traditionally conceded to Ammonius of Sakkas, of being the "Father of Neo-Platonism." However, if it is true that Plato "borrowed everything from Pythagoras and Moses, and Numenius is a Neo-Pythagorean as well as a mystic, quoted with approval by Pagan and Christian, on the one hand, by Porphyry, Chalcidius, and other like; on the other by Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Eusebius of Nicomedia," it can well be that the title in question belongs to the man of greater influence, in this case Numenius.

His *History of the Platonic Succession* was written to show "how far the later Platonists had strayed from their master, and how abortive these attempts were; what the genuine Plato had believed, with indications how to return thither." He always expresses the greatest reverence for and loyalty to Plato, who, as he insisted had collected the best of the best: Socrates and Pythagoras.

Philo of Alexandria, a Jew, has been by some accorded the precious title, but Dr. Guthrie makes the telling point that while he acknowledges Plato's philosophy as representative, it was to him no more than an interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures to which he demanded ultimate loyalty.

Numenius was a man of the world; he was not limited to Greek and Egyptian mysteries, but talked familiarly of the myths of Brahmins and Magi. It is however his knowledge and use of the Hebrew Scriptures which distinguishes him from other Greek philosophers. He refers to Moses simply as "the prophet," exactly as for him Homer is "the poet." Plato is the Greek Moses. It is remarkable that so wellknown a writer and thinker has left no account of the facts of his life that can be regarded as authoritative. He seems to have led a quiet but very human existence, being interested in dogs, hunting, wild animals, eggs and fishes. Philosophy, poetry and religion were his life, but an absence of austerity and an ever present fund of humor made him evidently a likable man. For him the "world-directing divinity is a pilot, safely steering the world-ship, by raising his eyes to find his way through the starry vault above him." The "human soul in search of ecstatic harmony is a boat hidden until the last moment by the waves of life's ocean." These two fancies may be but a variant of his master's famous simile of the relations between soul and body as illustrated by those of rider and horse. He united Hebraism and Egyptian philosophy as the soul of a new Platonic movement, considering it his mission to prepare for popular enjoyment and use the best in philosophy.

Dr. Guthrie, teacher clergyman professor, has brought to the compilation of this little editorial gem, long experience and much erudition, giving us in handy compact form a valuable contribution to an interesting phase in the history of the transition from Greek philosophy to Christian teachings. €